

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AID-05 TRSE-00 SAM-01 IO-13 EB-07 XMB-02 FRB-03 OMB-01

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R 151420Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4697

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 3466

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, XA, US, PFOR, SA

SUBJECT: SAUDI INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA: REQUEST FOR INFORMATIONAL
ASSISTANCE

REF JIDDA 3341 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: IN FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION WITH THE DIRECTOR OF AFRICAN
AND ASIAN AFFAIRS AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, WE WERE ASKED TO PROVIDE
BASIC INFORMATION ON THE POLITICAL ALIGNMENT AND ECONOMIC
PROSPECTS OF SEVERAL AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO WHICH THE SAG
IS CONSIDERING GIVING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. WE SAID THAT
ON A TRAIL BASIS WE WOULD ASK THE DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE
THIS INFORMATION ON ONE COUNTRY--THE CENTRAL AFRICAN
REPUBLIC--AS A TEST TO SEE IF IT WAS FEASIBLE FOR US
AND USEFUL FOR THE SAG. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT THE
DEPARTMENT PROVIDE THE BASIC INFORMATION OF THE CENTRAL
AFRICAN REPUBLIC LISTED IN PARA 5. END SUMMARY.

1. ON MAY 12, WE MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR

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OF AFRICAN AND ASIAN AFFAIRS TAHA DUGHATHIER FOR GENERAL

DISCUSSION OF SAUDI RELATIONS WITH AFRICA AND IN FOLLOW-UP TO THE REQUEST MADE TO THE DCM MAY 9 BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS FOR ASSISTANCE IN DEVELOPING INFORMATION ON AFRICAN STATES(REFTEL). DUGHAITHER INFORMED US THAT HE HAD BEEN DELEGATED THE RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN THE MINISTRY FOR DEVELOPING POSITION PAPERS ON THE ATTITUDE THE SAG SHOULD TAKE IN RESPONSE TO AID REQUESTS FROM VARIOUS AFRICAN COUNTRIES. DUGHAITHER (WHO IS UNCOMMONLY BRIGHT AND ENERGETIC FOR A FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL) SAID THAT HE WAS FINDING IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO TURN OUT A "SCIENTIFIC" AND FIRST-RATE PRODUCT DUE TO THE LIMITED RESOURCES AT HIS DISPOSAL AND HE ELABORATED ON THE REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM US MADE BY HIS SUPERIOR.

2. DUGHAITHER SAID THAT ON SOME SPECIFIC ISSUES THERE ARE POLITICAL DIFFERENCES IN THE APPROACHES OF THE US AND SAUDI ARABIA TOWARDS AFRICA. HOWEVER, IN BROAD POLITICAL TERMS (E.G. THE DESIRE TO STOP THE SPREAD OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE) AND IN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MATTERS THERE IS, HE SAID, A BORAD COINCIDENCE OF INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES. IN VIEW OF THIS, HE SAID THAT IT MAKES SENSE FOR THE US AND SAUDI ARABIA TO CONSULT AND COOPERATE WITH EACH OTHER ON SUCH MATTERS AS GIVING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. SAUDI ARABIA IS ANXIOUS THAT IT NOT GIVE MONEY TO REGIMES WHICH ARE COMMITTED TO THE COMMUNIST SYSTEM. IT DOES BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT IT SHOULD MAKE MONEY AVAILABLE TO REGIMES THAT ARE COZY WITH THE RUSSIANS AND OTHER COMMUNISTS IF THEY HAVE ADOPTED THAT POSITION OUT OF ECONOMIC NECESSITY, OR EVEN IF IT IS A TACTIC TO TRY AND PRY MORE ASSISTANCE OUT OF THE WEST.

3. WHILE SAUDI ARABIA IS PREPARED TO BE GENEROUS, IT IS NOT WILLING TO SEE ITS MONEY SQUANDERED ON PROJECTS THAT ARE NOT ECONOMICALLY SOUND. DUGHAITHER SAID THAT IN SEVERAL INSTANCES WHERE THE SAG HAD THE INFORMATION ON WHICH TO FORM A JUDGMENT, THEY HAD TURNED OWN PROJECTS THAT SHOWED NO PROMISE OF ECONOMIC RETURN IN A REASONABLE TIME. THESE NEGATIVE DECISIONS HAD NOT BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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POPULAR BUT THEY HAD BEEN ACCEPTED AND SAUDI ARABIA INTENDS TO ADHERE TO THIS POLICY. (HE ADDED THAT AT LEAST SOME MONEY WOULD PROBABLY BE GIVEN TO ALL COUNTRIES REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IF THEIR REGIMES ARE NOT TOO OBNOXIOUS.)

4. WE TOLD DUGHAITHER THAT WE WERE SURE THE USG WOULD WANT TO BE HELPFUL, BUT THAT IT WOULD BE AN ENORMOUS

JOB FOR US AND PROBABLY NOT VERY USEFUL FOR THE SAG IF WE WERE TO ATTEMPT TO COMPILE INFORMATION IN ANY DETAIL ON ALL OR MOST AFRICAN COUNTRIES. WE MIGHT, HOWEVER, BE ABLE TO PUT TOGETHER IN FARILY SHORT NOTICE BASIC INFORMATION ON INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES TO WHICH THE SAG IS CONSIDERING AID AT A PARTICULAR TIME.

5. DUGHAITHER SAID THAT THIS WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL. HE SAID THAT AT THE PRESENT TIME THE SAG IS MOST ACTIVELY CONSIDERING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, RWANDA, BURUNDI AND MALI. (THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER ACTUAL OR LIKELY AFRICAN AID RECIPPENTS, BUT THESE FOUR ARE CASES IN WHICH A MAJOR CONSIDERATION IS TO DRAW THE COUNTRY TOWARDS THE WESTERN CAMP.) AFTER FURTHER DISCUSSION, WE TOLD DUGHAITHER (WITH-OUT COMMITMENT) THAT WE WOULD SUGGEST TO THE DEPARTMENT AND OUR EMBASSY IN ONE OF THESE COUNTRIES THAT A SHORT PAPER BE PREPARED COVERING THE POINTS WHICH WOULD BE MOST IMPORTANT TO A SAUDI DECISION. IF THIS COULD BE DONE AND IF THE SAG FOUND IT USEFUL, WE MIGHT THEN CONSIDER DOING THE SAME FOR OTHER COUNTRIES. DUGHAITHER SAID THAT A PAPER ON THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC WOULD BE MOST USEFUL AT THIS TIME. IT EMERGED FROM OUR DISCUSSION THAT SUCH A PAPER SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

A. A BRIEF POLITICAL OVERVIEW WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE COUNTRY'S RELATIONS WITH THE WEST AND THE COMMUNIST STATES AND ON THE POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF THE COUNTRY'S LEADERSHIP. PARTICULARLY GERMANE WOULD BE THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF A MARXIYT COMMITMENT.

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B. BASIC STATUSTICAL INFORMATION ON THE ECONOMY WHICH WOULD POINT TO THE DEGREE OF NEED FOR ASSISTANCE AND THE AREAS IN WHICH IT WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE.

C. A BRIEF LOOK AT THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT PLANS OR ASPIRATIONS.

D. A USG OPINION ON WHAT PROJECTS ARE ECONOMICALLY WORTHY OF SUPPORT AND WHICH ARE UNREALISTIC, UNECONOMIC OR BEING CARRIED OUT PURELY FOR PRESTIGE REASONS.

6. COMMENT: ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS IN THE PAST YEAR OR SO, SAG OFFICIALS HAVE SPOKEN TO US OF THE NEED FOR CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION IN ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS OF AFRICA. WE HAVE OVER THIS PERIOD RESPONDED

TO A NUMBER OF REQUESTS FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION AND REGULARLY SHARE SUCH INFORMATION AS WE CAN PROPERLY PASS ON. THIS REQUEST IS DIFFERENT IN THAT IT AIMS AT SPECIFIC ACTION IN AN AREA (TOPICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC) OF INTEREST TO US. WE CANNOT BE SURE THAT THE INFORMATION WE PASS TO THE SAG WILL BE DETERMINING IN SAG DECISIONS, BUT WE ARE ALMOST CERTAIN THAT IT WILL BE CONSIDERED. IN VIEW OF THE PAUCITY OF THE SAG'S OWN INFORMATION RESOURCES ON AFRICAN MATTERS, IT WILL BE ABOUT THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT IT IS WORTH OUR WHILE TO RESPOND TO THIS SAG REQUEST. IT COULD LEAD TO CLOSER CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION ON AFRICAN MATTERS IN GENERAL PERHAPS GIVE US SOME STANDING IN ADVISING THE SAG ON BROADER ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE MATTERS--AN AREA IN WHICH THE SAG HAS GENERALLY KEPT ITS OWN COUNSEL.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT THE DEPARTMENT (OR EMBASSY BANGUI) PREPARE AND FORWARD TO US A PAPER CONTAINING THE POINTS OUTLINED IN PARAGRAPH 5 WHICH WE CAN PASS TO THE SAUDIS. THE PAPER SHOULD BE SHORT (NOT MORE THAN 4 OR 5 PAGES). WE SUGGEST THAT IT BE SYNTHESIZED FROM RECENT DOCUMENTS IN ORDER TO MAKE TI AVAILABLE IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME.
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